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DEPARTMENT FOR G/TIP, G, INL, DRL, EUR/PGI, EUR/SE

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SUBJECT: TIP IN TURKEY: TURKISH MEDIA ATTENTION, December 16-31, 2005

1. In response to G/TIP inquiries, national and international media sources published the following news articles about TIP in Turkey. Text of articles originally published in Turkish is provided through unofficial Embassy translation.
2. Published by the Turkish Daily News on Friday, December 16, 2005:

TITLE: Aksu in Athens for talks on human trafficking, crime

BEGIN TEXT: Greek President Karolos Papoulias yesterday received Turkish Interior Minister Abdulkadir Aksu along with Iranian and Pakistani ministers who were in Athens for a meeting on immigration and human trafficking, the Anatolia news agency said.

The visiting ministers reportedly briefed Papoulias about the meeting during which ways of fighting illegal immigration, human trafficking, drugs and organized crime were discussed.

Technical delegations were said to be working on a concluding statement to be signed at the end of the meeting today. The meeting on immigration and human trafficking was first scheduled between October 10 and 11, but was delayed due to the devastating earthquake that hit Pakistan.

Having wrapped up his bilateral talks with the Greek and visiting ministers, Aksu is expected to depart for Turkey this evening. END TEXT.

3. Published by the Turkish Daily News on Friday, December 16:

TITLE: 83 arrested in human trafficking ring

BEGIN TEXT: European police detained 83 alleged members of a human trafficking ring operating between Iraq and Britain, the European Union's body of prosecutors and magistrates, Eurojust, said yesterday.

The gang is said to have transported an unknown number of people from Iraq through Turkey, Greece, Italy, France and then across the North Sea to Britain. In the operation carried out simultaneously on Wednesday, 49 people were held in France, followed by 21 in Italy, 7 in Britain, 3 in Turkey and 2 in Greece, Eurojust said in a statement. Eurojust hosted talks in October to coordinate the raids.

"It is one of the most important, if not the most important operations dismantling clandestine migration networks in France," Paris Prosecutor Jean-Claude Marin told a news conference in the French capital. The operation followed a three-year investigation, Italian police said. END TEXT.

4. Published by Hurriyet on Friday, December 16:

TITLE: Transvestite Gang Caught Selling 12-year-old

BEGIN TEXT: One and a half months ago, M.B. reported to the police in Turgutlu, Manisa that her 12-year-old daughter was missing. It was determined that C.B. went to Izmir with a girlfriend and was raped by U.A. (19) in Hatay. It was also determined that C.B. was forced into prostitution by transvestites C.D. (27) and O.D. (21). Raids were carried out on two houses and U.A., C.D. and O.D. were captured. O.A., a university student who gave a ride to C.B., was also detained. C.B. was turned over to her family. U.A. and the two transvestites were arrested for forcefully keeping an underage girl, raping her and forcing her into prostitution. O.A. was set free by the prosecutor. END TEXT.

5. Published by Hurriyet on Friday, December 16:

TITLE: 20 arrested for having relations with a little girl

BEGIN TEXT: The 12 people arrested on charges of engaging in sexual intercourse with a 15-year-old F.A. were arrested have been joined by an Akyakali poet, O.O., and others, bringing the number arrested to 20. Most of them are fathers and sons. The first 12 were taken to the Jandarma for their testimony and the judge put them under arrest. F.A. has a 1.5-year-old baby, fathered by her step-father who raped her two years ago. F.A. was taken under the protection of the Mugla Orphanage. END TEXT.

16. Published by Yeni Safak on Friday, December 16:

TITLE: UNICEF: Poor children are slaves of rich countries

BEGIN TEXT: According to UNICEF, which states that 50 million children in developing countries are "unseen," each year 1.8 million children around the world are used in the sex industry and 5.7 million children are sold as slaves.

UNICEF noted that more than half of the children in developing countries are not registered after they are born. In its annual report entitled, "Status of World Children in 2006: Excluded and Unseen," UNICEF concluded that in most of the developing world, more than half of the children are not registered after birth and, thus, governments are not aware of the problems of these children. Also, trafficking of children cannot be prevented. According to UNICEF, each year approximately 1.8 million children are kidnapped for various reasons. In order to prevent maltreatment of children, one has to achieve targets in the fight against extreme poverty.

UNICEF stated that in all countries and societies children are being affected by exclusion. The primary reason is poverty, bad handling of public affairs, armed struggle and AIDS/HIV.

UNICEF noted that there were many factors that contributed to the increase in children being "unseen." It listed these factors as: there are no official IDs, children who do not have families are not protected enough by the state, exploitation and the expectation of young children to take an adult role.

Exploited children disappear in an illegal environment without a trace. They generally end up serving as prostitutes, in pornography, armed conflicts or other illegal activities.

In the report on the "unseen" children, the following was mentioned: Children who are not registered at birth are not included in official statistics and not recognized as a member of society. Children without an ID are sometimes excluded from educational, health and social security services. They cannot be protected from dangerous conditions since they are not treated as children. In developing countries, except China, 55 percent of all births are unregistered.

UNICEF reported that millions of children are suffering in front of the eyes of the world, but, paradoxically, away from their sight. They are ignored and people remain indifferent to their needs. In the report it was stated that street children are prone to all types of exploitation and maltreatment. According to estimates, there are more than one million children around the world who are in detention facilities. Their health, education and protection are not guarantee.

UNICEF President Ann Veneman noted that other than AIDS orphans, the number of children who are forced into marriage at a very early age was high. She noted that the number of children who end up on the streets and who disappear was very high. Veneman noted that a lot of children were used in the sex industry and said, "Cheap plane tickets and internet open easy paths for these children to become a sex slave in developed nations." END TEXT.

17. Reported by Tercuman on Saturday, December 24:

TITLE: Women forced into prostitution rescued

BEGIN TEXT: The Istanbul Security Directorate, Foreigner Division, reported that 12 foreign women had been brought to Istanbul, passports taken and forced into prostitution. Twelve women were rescued in a raid in the Aksaray district. One woman was arrested and sent to prison awaiting trial. In another raid, the team arrested 20 women from Ukraine, Moldova and The Kyrgyz Republic. Ukrainian S.L. was found to be carrying HIV. END TEXT.

18. Reported by Anadolu Agency on Sunday, December 25 and TurkishPress.com on Monday, December 26:

TITLE: Turkish Police Chief Aydiner in China

BEGIN TEXT: Turkish Police Chief Gokhan Aydiner has arrived in Beijing upon an invitation from the Chinese Public Security Ministry.

"We have excellent ties with the Chinese public security authorities. Based on a mutual agreement, a delegation from China visits Turkey one year and a delegation from Turkey visits China the next year," said Aydiner.

"The distance between us no longer is relevant. Crimes have become global and not merely local or regional. Turkey needs to cooperate with all countries in the fight against illegal drugs, arms and human trafficking," noted Aydiner.

Aydiner will return to Turkey on January 1st, 2006.
END TEXT.

19. Reported by Hurriyet in their Sunday supplement on Sunday, December 25:

BEGIN TEXT: Professors Esin Kuntay and Guliz Erginsoy studied girls who are younger than 18 and who are used as sex workers in Istanbul. They wrote the book, "Girls Who are Commercial Sex Workers."

Their research lasted for one year and they visited police stations, bars and discos in the Beyoglu district of Istanbul, and the lobby a five-star hotel.

They predicted that there is around 300-400 such girls and they managed to interview 80 of them.

Some characteristics of these girls are:

-- They hate big families and refer to their fathers as "psychopath/alcoholic," and their mothers as "witch." They were emotionally, physically and sexually exploited by their families.

-- Most of them were from immigrant families who came to Istanbul from elsewhere.

-- Limited means, lack of interest and education levels dragged these girls to the streets. Another trigger was whether their fathers were drug addicts or alcoholics. Their fathers were generally fishermen, cab drivers, butchers, marble masters and they beat their wives.

-- Once a girl leaves home, she lives on the streets where they are found by either young or older people working in the prostitution sector. They are taken under their protection.

-- One girl said, "I wanted to be free. So I fled from home, but there is no freedom in the streets either. On the contrary, you are a slave. You may not want to work at least one day a week, but cannot do so. You need to eat and pay the hotel bill. So you have to go back to the disco. You cannot drink a cup of coffee without paying the price. You are a slave. I want to fight and get rid of this situation, but I wonder what my chances are?"

-- Most of the interviewed girls were 17 years old. One-fifth of them have been working as prostitutes for five years and two-fifths for one year.

-- They look like ordinary girls.

-- They say that they feel as though they are 60 or 70 years old. They enjoy shopping and having fast food in their spare time.

-- They are ashamed of the job they do, and most of them cut their wrists.

-- When they earn enough money, they hope to open a cosmetics shop, get married and have children and buy their mothers a fully automatic washing machine.

-- Most of them are primary school graduates or they did not go to school at all. In the past they were involved in the textile business, worked at a hairdresser or as a salesperson.

-- Around 30 percent were subject to beating and other types of exploitation, including emotional, physical and sexual.

-- They were raised in religious homes. Many were sent to mosques and Koran courses.

-- They work mostly in the Taksim, Cihangir, Tarlabasi, Galata, Kuledibi, Beyoglu, Dolapdere, Etiler, Moda and Kadikoy districts. END TEXT.

10. Published by Cumhuriyet on Sunday, December 25:

BEGIN TEXT: Professors Esin Kuntay and Guliz Erginsoy wrote a book on girls who are younger than 18 and who

are used as sex slaves. The name of the book is "Girls Who are Commercial Sex Workers."

Kuntay wrote, "These children are victims. If somebody holds their hands, a great majority can be saved. There are those who began this business when they were 10 or 11."

The book tells about the life stories of these child victims of exploitation.

The writers were aiming to help these girls and the UNICEF Turkey office, the Interior Ministry and Turkish National Police and the Istanbul Governor's office supported them. As a result, a "First Step Center" was established. Some of the girls who once worked as sex slaves are now living in this center.

Professors Kuntay and Erginsoy said, "As two female sociologists, we have done our best given the conditions, but we do not find this sufficient. We need important and long-term moral and financial support from the public, the civic society, the youth, academicians, international organizations, foundations and associations."

The professors spoke to 30 girls aged between 14 and 18 who worked as sex workers.

Highlights include:

- The most convenient places for them to work in the city center are: the European side (Taksim, Cihangir, Tarlabasi, Galata, Kuledibi, Dolapdere and Etiler), and the Asian side (Moda and Kadikoy).
- Some houses, bars, hotels and restaurants in these districts are open 24 hours a day.
- In Aksaray and Laleli, the sex slaves from Romania, Russia, Ukraine, Lithuania, Latvia and Moldova dominate the trade.
- Other alternatives are Bakirkoy and Atakoy, along with Istiniye, Bostanci and Maltepe.
- Outside the city center, they operate in districts such as Avcilar, Kanarya, Sefakoy, Cekmece, Belgrade Woods, Kilyos and Polonezkoy. In these districts, they use houses, cafes, hotels, parks, parking lots and the forest.
- These girls would like to have a decent job and a house.
- Some of them would like to see their families and be a housewife, raising kids.
- Some would like to learn how to use a computer.
- Some wanted to go back to age three or four and live without realizing the things they experienced.

Sample stories included:

- My mother might even kill someone. She told me that she would break my legs if I ever go out again. She has not done so yet, but it is hard to tell what she would do if she got really angry. She keeps throwing things at me.
- My mother beat me. She pinned me down with a dog leash. She broke a stick on my back.
- My father did not come home for a year. Later he asked me to beg. He hung me from the ceiling and beat me. I began to beg. He was beating me with a stick.
- He took me to his car and he did not even pay me. He burned me with his cigarette. I began to scream and he put a sheet in my mouth. END TEXT.

11. Published by the Turkish Daily News on Tuesday, December 27:

TITLE: Police chief in China for talks

BEGIN TEXT: Police Director-General Gokhan Aydiner yesterday met with Chinese Public Security Minister Zhou Yongkang as part of his talks in Beijing, reported the Anatolia news agency.

The talks between the two officials centered on the improvement of cooperation between the police directorates of Turkey and China.

The Turkish delegation, led by Aydiner, had a meeting later in the day with Chinese officials to seek ways to fight cross-border crimes including terrorism and human trafficking. The Turkish delegation is set to depart today for Sanya and Shenzhen and will return home on January 1 after a visit to Hong Kong. END TEXT.

12. Published by The Independent on Wednesday, December 28:

TITLE: Customers help stamp out Turkey's sex slaves

BEGIN TEXT: By Meriel Beattie in Ankara

An unlikely hero has emerged in Turkey to rescue victims of forced prostitution: the brothel customer.

While the country's security forces are hardly renowned for their attention to human rights or sympathetic treatment of women, they have been chalking up impressive successes in finding and freeing trafficked women from brothels.

In the past six months, 100 women - mostly from Ukraine, Moldova, Romania or Russia - have been rescued from sex slavery and Turkish police have broken up 10 trafficking networks.

There are two reasons for these results. A charge-free hotline was set up in May by the UN's International Organization for Migration (IOM) for women to call for help. It is staffed by multi-lingual operators who try to pinpoint where the women are - and then send in the police.

But the second, more unexpected, factor is the chivalry of the Turkish brothel client. Since the hotline started, 74 per cent of tip-offs have come from men: customers who have learned to spot the difference between a professional prostitute, and someone who has been forced into it.

"I have been very surprised," said Marielle Lindstrom, head of the IOM in Turkey. "We have not noticed this anywhere in Europe. Turkish men seem to have an old-fashioned view of women. They do not mind using prostitutes, but they want the women to be doing this willingly. If she is found not to be doing it willingly . it affects their pride."

Unlike the professional Russian prostitutes, nicknamed "Natashas," who invaded casinos and clubs of holiday resorts in the 1990s, the trafficked women are not migrant sex workers.

Typically they have been tricked into thinking they are coming to better-paid jobs. "I was told that someone named Veysel would meet me at the Antalya airport and take me to my new job," one 31-year-old Moldovan woman told her rescuers. "Instead he took my passport and took me to a village. They put a gun to my head and threatened me, and then beat me. They told me if I did not consent, they would kill me. They kept me locked in the house and brought customers to me."

The hotline was publicized in two ways: passport officials at borders and airports slip an information leaflet into the passports of women from high-risk countries; and a Russian language advert has been playing on Turkish television stations.

"Turkey respects your rights," it says. "If anyone takes away your passport, your freedom, or forces you to perform work of any kind without pay, call the helpline 157, free of charge. Any time, any phone." END TEXT.

13. Published by Hurriyet and Vatan on Wednesday, December 28:

TITLE: New Year's address "Mother Santa" service

BEGIN TEXT: A raid was carried out on a house which was going to offer "Mother Santa"-costumed women. The female ringleader, along with five gang members and 11 prostitutes, were caught.

Upon a tip, four plainclothes policemen called a cell phone number of a member of a gang which reportedly was selling women. When the police found out that women dressed up as "Mother Santa" were being provided to special customers for New Year's, they posed as clients.

The policemen got in contact with the ringleader, Z.O., gave an important name as a reference, and made a deal. Each woman would cost 250 Euros. Giving marked bills, the police raided a house in the Gursu District and arrested 11 prostitutes, four of them foreign. The ringleader, Z.O., and gang members M.C., K.S., K.U., Y.G. and G.C. were arrested. Six of the suspects were sent to the judiciary. END TEXT.

14. Published by the Turkish Daily News on Thursday, December 29:

TITLE: Free hotline service set up to help women proves to be successful

BEGIN TEXT: The practice of a charge-free hotline, which was set up in May by the United Nations' International Organization for Migration (IOM) for women to call for help, has been successful, the Anatolia news agency said yesterday.

In the past six months, 100 women - mostly from Ukraine, Moldova, Romania and Russia - have been rescued from sex slavery, and Turkish police have broken up 10 trafficking networks.

Since the hotline started, 74 percent of tip-offs have come from men: customers who have learned to spot the difference between a professional prostitute and someone who has been forced into it.

"I have been surprised," Marielle Lindstrom, head of the IOM in Turkey, told the British daily The Independent. "We have not noticed this anywhere in Europe. Turkish men seem to have an old-fashioned view of women. They do not mind using prostitutes, but they want the woman to be doing this willingly. If she is found not to be doing it willingly . it affects their pride." END TEXT.

15. Carried by Vatan, Radikal, Aksam, Hurriyet and Milliyet on Thursday, December 29:

TITLE: Turkish men are UN knights

BEGIN TEXT: Seventy-four percent of the calls into the hotline for women forced into prostitution are from men, which has surprised the foreign press. The United Nations' International Office for Migration (IOM) has reported that seventy-four percent of the calls coming into a free hotline for women forced into prostitution come from men.

Quoting IOM's Marielle Lindstrom in the British Independent, it was stated that IOM officials were surprised that callers were mostly men trying to help human trafficking victims. Lindstrom said that nowhere else in Europe had they encountered such a thing.

The Independent noted that brothel clients were the heroes helping those women who were forced into prostitution in Turkey.

Lindstrom noted that in the last six months around 100 sex slaves, mostly from the Ukraine, Moldova, Romania and Russia were saved. The Turkish police uprooted ten gangs.

She noted that Turkish men regarded women in the old-fashioned way. They reportedly did not mind going to prostitutes as long as they did their job voluntarily. "If they notice that women are doing it involuntarily, then their ego gets hurt," she noted. END TEXT.

16. Published in the December edition of IOM's Migration magazine:

TITLE: Elena's Ordeal - The Story of a Trafficked Woman, by Lilia Cojocaru, IOM Chisinau

BEGIN TEXT: "It was five o'clock in the morning. They got me drunk and fell asleep. I went to the balcony and there I saw my chance for escape," recalls Elena, a 19-year-old Moldovan girl. She had risked her life to escape from a high-rise building in Turkey where she had been imprisoned and forced into prostitution. "Between the sixth and fifth floor I lost my grip and fell. Suddenly, everything around me was like a white light."

Like many other Moldovan girls, Elena had been driven to leave the country in search of a better life. "My father died when I was 12 and my mother is retired. Her pension is so small that we could not survive. I found a job in a neighboring town, but the two dollars I got a day was not enough to earn a living. One day, a relative who was living in Turkey came up to me and suggested I go to work in Istanbul. I agreed," she explains.

She got a job as a shop assistant. After several months she went home to Moldova to see her mother. But when she returned, her job had gone and it was not easy finding another one. As she was not working, when two women she knew invited her one day to join them and their boyfriends on a trip to the Turkish capital resort of Antalya for a few days, she agreed.

"When we arrived, they said they would go shopping and left me with two men in the apartment. They took my

passport and sold me like a piece of merchandise to some other man," she said, with tears in her eyes at the memory.

For the next 15 days, Elena was forced to work as a prostitute with three to four clients a day. Desperate to escape her imprisonment, she decided to climb down from the seventh floor balcony where she was. She got as far as the window below before literally slipping to freedom. The escape attempt left her with numerous life-threatening injuries, including a crush spinal cord and pelvis.

Luckily for Elena, the people who found her took her to a hospital. She was eventually referred to IOM whose missions in Turkey and Moldova organized for her return to Moldova with a medical escort.

"Elena was brought to the IOM rehabilitation shelter in Chisinau. She was in a bad physical and psychological state. She could not move at all. At 19 years old, she looked like a child. She was very thin. She weighed only 35 kgs but she is 170 cm tall," recalls Viorel Gorceag, medical officer at IOM Chisinau.

Her case is unfortunately not uncommon. Victims of trafficking typically suffer a series of abuse - the dismal conditions at home that push them into the hands of traffickers, the abuse by pimps and clients alike, the wounds and accidents they often suffer when trying to free themselves and finally, the stigmatization when they return home.

"For me the most heart-wrenching suffering is what they endure when they are ready to risk everything to escape. I have seen many women with broken limbs and knife wounds after trying to escape their personal hell," says Martin Andreas Wyss, IOM's Chief of Mission to Moldova.

When Elena arrived at the rehabilitation center, she was depressed and no longer had a desire to live. The only person she wanted to see was her mother. But six weeks on at the IOM center, her psychological state, if not her physical state, had improved significantly. Enough for her to regain the will to live.

It was this fighting spirit that impressed a group of US Congresswomen visiting the IOM center.

"When our Congressional delegation on sex trafficking saw Elena and heard her story, we were very moved. We knew that medical treatment in her home country offered little prospect of improving her physical health, so we decided to help. I did not know where to start, so I called my good friend, Dr. Pedro Nosnik, who led me to the physicians at the Texas Back Institute," Kay Granger of Fort Worth, Texas said. "I was haunted by her story."

Now the Texas Back Institute Research Foundation in the US, which agreed not to charge Elena for treatment, reports incredible results. Elena can move all her extremities and appears to have full strength and ability in her legs.

For physical therapy, Elena was moved to a senior citizen care facility near the hospital. It was the only place where the Foundation could host her but they were worried about her living with older people. However, the residents welcomed her with open arms.

"I feel so grateful that we have gotten to meet Elena. She is such an amazing person," said Britney Chambers, spokesperson for the Texas Back Institute. "I cannot imagine going through what she has been through and coming out smiling and positive like Elena. She feels like she can take on the world now, and I believe she can."

Congresswoman Granger also sees the change. "When I first saw Elena in the Moldovan shelter, she was a young lady without much hope. Today, Elena can walk well with the aid of a cane and has hope for the future, for living life to its fullest. Her eyes are alive with excitement, something that was not there a few short months ago," she explains. END TEXT.

WILSON